Launching Your
NIDCD
Research
Career

Launching Your NIDCD Research Career

What research-training funding opportunities are available through the NIDCD?

The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) funds research and research training in the normal and disordered processes of hearing, balance, taste, smell, voice, speech, and language. The NIDCD is one of the Institutes that comprise the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which is the federal government's focal point for the support of biomedical research.

For a comprehensive listing of research training and career development funding mechanisms, please go to the NIDCD website at http://www.nidcd.nih.gov.

What am I eligible for?

Each of the award mechanisms for supporting research training and career development addresses a specific career stage and set of training needs. You should review the eligibility criteria and provisions of the funding mechanism in which you are interested. In addition, we strongly encourage you to contact the designated NIDCD program officer for your desired research training mechanism. You can find a staff list on page 8 of this booklet.

The NIDCD helps scientists at all stages of their careers—from high school students to senior scientists.

What factors should I consider in choosing the most appropriate funding mechanism?

Your level of education and research experience

Predoctoral level, postdoctoral level, or newly independent investigator

Citizenship status requirements

U.S. citizenship, permanent residency, non-citizen national (living in U.S. territories) status, foreign national in the United States on a temporary visa

Whether you are a member of an underrepresented group in biomedical or behavioral research

Including racial and ethnic minority groups, or people from disadvantaged backgrounds or who have disabilities

The kind of support you are seeking

- Stipend or salary support
- Tuition/fees
- Health insurance
- Research development support
  (e.g., equipment, supplies, technical support)
- Duration of support

How will my fellowship application be reviewed?

Fellowships are peer-reviewed by a group of scientists convened by the NIDCD. NIDCD staff provide second-level and programmatic review of the NIDCD fellowship applications and make recommendations to the NIDCD leadership for final funding decisions.

For more information on the review process for fellowship applications, please visit the NIDCD website.

How long will it take to review and fund my fellowship application?

Favorably reviewed fellowship applications are often funded within four to five months of submission.

How do I apply?

Most NIH award programs now require you to apply online. Applicants should consult the appropriate Funding Opportunity Announcement for guidance on how to apply.

How to Apply for an NIDCD Grant, available in print and online at the NIDCD website, and "The NIDCD Fellowship: Frequently Asked Questions" page, also on the NIDCD website, provide guidance about the application and review process.

You can also consult the National Institutes of Health (NIH) or the NIH Center for Scientific Review websites.

How can I find out if the NIDCD is interested in my area of research?

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their research interests with the appropriate NIDCD scientific program officer. You might also find it helpful to consult the Research, and Funding for Research, sections of the NIDCD website. In addition, the *NIDCD Strategic Plan*, also available on the website, describes focused areas of NIDCD research interest and opportunity.

What are the critical things I need to keep in mind as I prepare to submit my fellowship application?

❑ Comply with all application instructions, such as page limits and formatting.

❑ Have at least three letters of recommendation submitted on your behalf using the required rating form.

❑ Include a training plan for the responsible conduct of research, or provide documentation if you've recently completed the training.

❑ Comply with requirements for protection of human subjects.

❑ Comply with animal welfare requirements.

❑ Comply with inclusion of human subjects requirements (e.g., gender, minority status, and inclusion of children).

❑ Submit your application on time.

❑ Make sure your NIH eRA Commons account indicates that your electronic application has been received.

What training award mechanisms are available and what do these provide?

Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards (NRSAs) (Fellowships)

These awards provide a stipend, partial coverage of tuition, fees, health insurance, and trainee travel. You must be a U.S. citizen, foreign national, or permanent resident to apply. There is a service payback obligation for postdoctoral researchers. You can find more detailed information about these fellowships on the NIDCD website.

Ruth L. Kirschstein NRSAs for Individual Predoctoral M.D./Ph.D. and Other Dual Doctoral Degree Fellows (F30)

Ruth L. Kirschstein NRSAs for Individual Predoctoral Fellows (F31)

Ruth L. Kirschstein NRSAs for Individual Postdoctoral Fellows (F32)

Ruth L. Kirschstein NRSAs for Individual Predoctoral Fellowships to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research (F31 Diversity Awards)

What are the fellowship review criteria?

The review criteria are listed in the Funding Opportunity Announcements and include Fellowship Applicant; Sponsors, Collaborators, and Consultants; Research Training Plan; Training Potential; and Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training. "The NIDCD Fellowship: Frequently Asked Questions" page on the NIDCD website has more information about these funding mechanisms.

What career development award opportunities are available for clinically trained junior faculty members?

If you are a clinically trained junior faculty member (or the equivalent in a nonacademic setting) with two or more years of prior research experience and you are on a clinician-scientist career path, you are eligible for a K08 or K23 award. Most NIH K award programs, including the K08 and K23 awards, require U.S. citizenship or permanent residency status.

The **Mentored Clinical Scientist Development Award (K08)** fosters the development of highly promising clinician-scientists who seek

to integrate fundamental research and clinical practice into their future careers as independent investigators.

The **Mentored Patient-Oriented Research Career Development Award (K23)** is a sister program to the K08. Patient-oriented research is defined as research on human subjects or material of human origin, in which the investigator directly interacts with human subjects.

What makes a K08/K23 application successful?

When considering whether to apply for a mentored K award, consider the questions below:

❑ Do you have prior research experience?

❑ Have you been first author on published or in-press experimental research papers?

❑ Have you held a small, peer-reviewed research or seed grant from a funding agency or professional society?

❑ Do you have strong institutional support (a favorable research start-up package or protected research time)?

❑ If you are submitting a revised application, have you provided strong responses to reviewer critiques?

❑ Have you contacted the NIDCD program officer responsible for the K award program?

What other award mechanisms are available for beginning investigators?

The NIDCD Small Grant Program (R03) supports newly independent investigators and advanced postdoctoral fellows within seven years of completing their terminal degree (excluding years of clinical training) as they transition to research independence.

NIH Pathways to Independence Award (K99/R00) supports highly promising postdoctoral fellows (the K99 phase) and enables them to secure an independent research position (R00 phase). This award is intended to enable the awardee to be competitive for R01 grant funding early in their careers. U.S. citizens and non-citizens are eligible to apply.

How does the NIH determine Early Stage Investigator (ESI) status?

What is an ESI? An ESI is a new investigator (someone who hasn't previously competed successfully for a full-scale NIH research grant) who is within 10 years of completing his or her terminal research degree, or is within 10 years of completing medical residency or the equivalent.

ESIs are identified in the NIH eRA Commons (the place where you apply for your grant on the Office of Extramural Research's website) based on information entered by prospective applicants about degree conferral dates and end-of-residency dates. To ensure that the NIH recognizes your ESI status, you must update your eRA Commons profile to reflect the completion date of your degree or residency. There is more information about ESI and new investigators at the Office of Extramural Research's website at *http://www.grants.nih.gov*.

How are ESI applications reviewed? Reviews of applications from ESIs are clustered within NIH review committees, when possible, so that applicants will be judged against their peers.

How is the NIDCD helping ESI applicants succeed? The NIDCD employs a special second-level review process for ESI-submitted R01 applications. ESI applications are given special consideration for funding by the National Deafness and Other Commmunication Disorders Advisory Council.

Are there other assistance programs?

NIH Loan Repayment Program

Educational loan repayment may be available for doctoral-level health professionals (broadly defined as both clinicians and non-clinicians) who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents seeking research careers involving clinical research or pediatric research. Educational debt must equal at least 20 percent of institutional base salary, and the recipient must commit at least 50 percent effort to conduct qualifying research for the two-year period of the award.

NIH Diversity Supplement Program

The NIDCD provides opportunities for people from underrepresented groups, including those from racial and ethnic minority groups, and people with qualifying disabilities or disadvantaged backgrounds, who are interested in entering or resuming research careers in the biomedical and behavioral sciences. These programs support research experiences for a range of educational and career levels—from high school students to research scientists and faculty members—by supplementing active NIDCD grants.

Who can help guide me through the process?

The Division of Scientific Programs manages the extramural research and research training portfolios of grants and contracts for the NIDCD. Whatever your level of training need or career stage, a scientific program officer can be a key resource for you. The following scientific program officers are available to assist you:

Training and Career Development (F, K, T)

Daniel Sklare, Ph.D.
sklared@nidcd.nih.gov
Individual fellowship awards (F-series), career development awards (K-series), institutional training grants (T-series)

Hearing and Balance

Janet Cyr, Ph.D.
cyrj@nidcd.nih.gov
Presbycusis, noise-induced hearing loss, peripheral auditory and vestibular system

Amy Donahue, Ph.D.
donahuea@nidcd.nih.gov
Psychoacoustics, cochlear mechanics, cochlear implants, clinical assessment and management

Nancy L. Freeman, Ph.D.
freemann@nidcd.nih.gov
Cellular regeneration, development, transduction

Roger Miller, Ph.D.
millerr@nidcd.nih.gov
Biomedical engineering, neural prostheses, tinnitus

Christopher Platt, Ph.D.
plattc@nidcd.nih.gov
Central auditory and vestibular pathways, temporal bone

Bracie Watson, Ph.D.
watsonb@nidcd.nih.gov
Genetics, otitis media, immune-mediated ear diseases

Taste and Smell

Susan Sullivan, Ph.D.
sullivas@nidcd.nih.gov

Language

Judith Cooper, Ph.D.
cooperj@nidcd.nih.gov

Voice and Speech

Lana Shekim, Ph.D.
shekiml@nidcd.nih.gov

Epidemiology and Statistics

Howard Hoffman, M.A.
hoffmanh@nidcd.nih.gov

Clinical Trials

Gordon Hughes, M.D.
hughesg@nidcd.nih.gov

In addition, the NIDCD conducts research within the laboratories of its Division of Intramural Research, located on or near the NIH campus in Bethesda, Md. These laboratories also offer research training opportunities.

For more information on the NIDCD's intramural research program, please visit the NIDCD website at http://www.nidcd.nih. gov.

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